

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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Important Announcement

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Endowing a Doctrine

Sidney Hall of Hartford, Conn., a member of the Adventist Christian church, provided in his will a considerable fund, the interest on which is to be used to combat the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Commenting upon this strange bequest the newspapers confound this Adventist idea of the immortality of the soul with the general idea of the future life. This is a mistake. They believe in a future life, but do not believe that the soul is intrinsically or naturally immortal. It is rendered immortal by the new birth, or more exactly speaking, the new birth is the birth of immortality. The Adventist conception of man previous to his regeneration is a wholly material one, and death to this natural man is an eternal sleep. Even the regenerate sleep from the moment of death to the dawn of the resurrection, and then awake in glory. But the ungodly wake never, or if they do it is to be destroyed. It is from this angle of thought that the Adventist makes righteousness the condition of immortality. To them immortality, eternal life, salvation are interchangeable terms. In the commonly accepted orthodox view a man may be immortal in perdition. The perdition of the Adventist is annihilation.

Without entering into discussion as to the reasonableness of this doctrine, its scripturalness or unscripturalness, we are unable to understand why an Adventist should feel so strongly upon the subject as to be willing to devote thousands of dollars to combat the theory of natural immortality. A notion or a hobby may come to fill a man's whole intellectual horizon. By dwelling upon a single idea we gradually lend to it an excessive importance, until eventually the sense of proportion is sadly distorted, if not entirely destroyed. A section of the truth, or even a half truth, is taken for the whole truth, and the religious crank immediately arrives. The tendency is a natural one, and every man who desires a broad, consistent and symmetrical development, whether of mind or spirit, should be on his guard against it, and should diligently preserve that

logical sense of just proportion which will always enable him to discriminate between the lesser and larger matter and cultivate that soundness of mind which is so essential to the highest success in life.

Worked Over

All the waste paper, and the quantity must be enormous, which a city like New York furnishes, is regularly collected and sent to pulp mills in Newark, where it is worked over into nice, clean, white paper. The stains, and the dirt, and the writing or printing on it are thoroughly washed out, or chemicalized out, so that when it issues from the elaborate machinery it is again a spotless sheet, ready for service, and for the tracery of thought and purpose, religious commercial, literary, scientific, according to whatever hands it may fall into. But sometimes intractable material finds its way into this mass of waste paper which is not simply unworkable, but dangerous. For example, a citizen announced to authorities recently that two sticks of dynamite which he had placed in a paper bag were inadvertently thrown by a servant into the waste paper box, and carted off to the mills. This news made a panic among the mill men, for imagine what would happen when that dynamite got into the machinery. There was nothing in dynamite out of which paper could be made, but there was something in it calculated to produce a fine article of destruction. Suffer us to moralize a little on the basis of this incident, and say that possibly the divine chemistry may work over into a pure white page the stained and soiled waste paper of our past lives, but there is something about us of a kind that is not workable into anything good, or useful, or pretty, or pure. For instance, we are exhorted not to work over our besetting sins, but to lay them aside. That bad habit of yours, that vice, that self indulgence, that passion, is not simply waste paper; it is dynamite. It can't be worked over, it must be put aside, or destroyed, else suddenly, when least looked for, the explosion will come, the exposure will be published to men and angels, and the wreck of a life will encumber the ground. Work over by all means that in your life which is waste,—waste time, waste talents, misdirected purpose, defects, imperfections,—but that which is distinctly sin, destroy. It cannot be worked over, and there is no chemical, not even in God's laboratory, which can make its black white.